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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

Students enrolled in cooperative occupational education (COE) should achieve optimal development. To ensure this, instructors should use criteria from the psychology of education. They must strive to see that learning opportunities for COE students are meaningful; interesting; centered upon providing for individual differences; balanced among three categories of objectives--understandings, skills, and attitudes; and purposeful. Teaching should emphasize those appropriate psychologies that guide each COE student to attain as much as possible. These psychologies include behaviorism and humanism. Instructors should also select philosophies that provide for optimal student progress, such as problem solving, decision making, and predetermined COE curricula. (YLB)

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COOPERATIVE OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Marlow Ediger
Northeast Missouri State University

Students enrolled in cooperative occupational education (COE) need to achieve optimal development. Each student must experience selected criteria when participating in COE programs. These criteria make for excellence in vocational education programs.

Criteria and COE

Students in COE should experience meaning in vocational training. Meaningless tasks do not harmony with a quality curriculum. With meaningful tasks, students understand what is being learned. Meaning theory is vital to emphasize in ongoing programs involving COE. With adequate readiness to participate, the COE student is able to understand what is to be achieved with meaningful experiences.

Interest in COE is vital. With interest, the student and the task become one and not separate entities. Interest in vocational education emphasizes achievement, growth, and development. Too frequently, students do not reveal interest in COE. Rather, quality tasks need to be in the offing which capture student interest.

Individual differences need to receive ample attention. Students differ from each other in capacity and achievement. In teaching - learning situations, it is vital to start instruction where the present achievement level of each student is. This is the beginning of

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providing for individual differences. Perhaps, the most salient facet of instruction in COE is to start instruction where each learner is at the present time.

Sequence in tasks is significant. After determining where each student is presently in achievement, the instructor needs to be certain that sequence in learning is in evidence. Each COE student needs to perceive order in tasks being pursued. Be it a logical or psychological curriculum, the student needs to experience a sequential series of activities and experiences in COE.

Balance among understanding, skills, and attitudinal goals is important for student acquisition. Pertaining to understandings, each student should achieve vital facts, concepts, and generalizations. Skills ends are also vital for student attainment. Skills stress the level of application in that understandings achieved are being utilized in new situations. To be able to apply content in practical situations, the student must possess traits of readiness, sequence, and purpose. Vital skills then need to be achieved. The third category of objectives, namely attitudes, stresses student feeling positive about COE within the framework of understandings and skills objectives. Positive attitudes assist students to attain more optimally in understandings and skills objectives.

Learners should perceive purpose in learning. With purpose, students accept reasons for attaining worthwhile understandings, skills, and attitudinal ends. Purpose may be developed through exhortation,

intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation, as well as through primary and secondary reinforcers. With accepting perceived purpose, the student has positive feelings toward the COE curriculum.

Psychology of Teaching COE

Each psychology emphasized in teaching - learning experiences should harmonize with individual students' capacity and achievement. Learners should be guided to attain as much as possible individually.

Behaviorism, as a psychology of learning, advocates instructors writing specific objectives for students to attain.

The objectives are highly specific and it can be measured, after instruction, if students have been successful in goal attainment.

Objectives

1. need to be stressed in ascending order of difficulty in teaching students.
2. must stress quality order or sequence.
3. should be highly specific so that student achievement can be measured.

Humanism, as a second psychology of instruction, emphasizes students being involved in determining the COE curriculum. Thus, rather heavy input from students in terms of what to learn (the objectives), the means of goal attainment (learning opportunities), and appraisal procedures (approaches in noticing learner progress) need to be in

evidence.

According to humanism, objectives

1. should be open ended and subject to change with student input.

2. need to reflect a student centered curriculum, not an adult centered approach of teaching and learning.

3. must reflect a humane curriculum in that student - teacher planning is involved.

Perhaps, balance between behaviorism and humanism may be emphasized in COE. The basics might be stressed within the framework of behaviorism, whereas learner choice/ selection as electives may be emphasized within humanism, as a psychology of instruction.

Philosophy of Instruction and COE

Problem solving, as one philosophy, might be the most salient of diverse philosophical schools of thought. In COE, students with instructor guidance identify one or more problems. After problem selection, information is brought to bear upon the identified problem. This follows with an answer or hypothesis. The answer/hypothesis is subject to testing. Revision of the hypothesis is emphasized if evidence warrants. Problem solving is useful in COE, as well as in society.

Decision-making is salient also in COE a well as in society. Decision-making may or may not involve problem solving. In COE training

Decision-making may or may not involve problem solving. In COE training programs, the student is rather heavily involved, within a flexible framework, as to which objectives, activities and experiences, as well as appraisal procedures are to be selected.

A predetermined instructor centered COE program may be developed. The instructor solely determines objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal procedures. Sequence in learning for students is determined by the COE instructor. Scope, the breadth of goals emphasized in COE, is also determined by the instructor.

In Closing

Students in COE need to achieve optimally. Instructors must utilize quality criteria from the psychology of education. Thus, learning opportunities for COE students must be

1. meaningful.
2. interesting.
3. centered upon providing for individual differences.
4. contain balance among three categories of objectives - understandings, skills, and attitudes.
5. purposeful.

Appropriate psychologies must be provided which guide each COE student to attain as much as possible. These psychologies include

1. behaviorism.

2. humanism.

Quality philosophies which need to be selected based on providing for optimal student progress include

1. problem solving.
2. decision-making.
3. predetermined COE curricula.